

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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1. In general in the Soviet Union all children from the ages of approximately seven to fourteen or fifteen must by law attend school. These schools are free of charge. The normal length of the school course is seven years. In outlying districts, however, because of the shortage of school facilities and teachers, competent or otherwise, the schools are often of only four years' duration. In these districts the children, at the end of their four years of schooling, go to work in most cases on the local kolkhoz. Only in the event the parents can somehow manage to bear the expense of having the child go elsewhere to live with relatives or friends does a child from one of these remote areas have the opportunity to have more than four years of school. In the larger cities, such as Moscow and Leningrad, there also are ten-year schools. In 1948 any schooling beyond the seven-year school was paid for by the parents, although at a nominal rate.

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3. The study of the constitution of the USSR begins in the seventh year. It is compared with the constitutions of governments of the Western world and, by comparison, the students are shown why Western countries actually do not possess liberty. Analysis of Western constitutions shows why it is inevitable that the workers in capitalist countries live and always will live in poverty. Many children truly believe that the dragons of the world are the capitalists.

School Conditions

4. The conditions in the schools in the villages are usually far below the norm of city schools. The problems are many: poor equipment, old furniture, few study aids, constant shortage of textbooks and writing materials, lack of fuel, very poor sanitary facilities. For a while, in order to solve the fuel problem during the winter, each student was required to gather and bring to the school a specified quantity of wood. In the village schools as well as in the city schools one of the major problems is petty thievery. Stealing of pens, pencils, hats, and coats occurs daily. Even in Moscow the parents are forced to take their children to school and take the children's hats and outer clothing from them when they leave them at school. In the evening the parents bring the outer clothing back to school, dress their children, and take them home. Almost none of the village schools have lunch-room facilities. However, all Soviet schools have amateur circles or societies for singing, crocheting, sports, and dramatics sponsored by the Pioneers or Komsomols.

Schools for the Privileged

5. In Moscow there is a special middle school of ten classes for the children of members of the Politburo and children of the heads of the Government.¹ The conditions here are superior to those of any of the other schools. Organized unofficially to keep the children of high-ranking government officials from associating with the children of the common people, the school also acts as a reverse shield in preventing the common people from knowing how the children of the hierarchy live and spend their time. In the majority of cases the children come to school in chauffeur-driven cars. The following story about the school was circulated in 1937: When young Vasilii Stalin was attending this school, he was usually late for classes. This became increasingly embarrassing for the director of the school, since the other students were well aware of young Stalin's tardiness. When reprimanded for his tardiness, young Stalin informed the director that he was late, and would continue to be so, since he was forced to take a street car or walk to the school. The director is reported to have called Stalin himself and reported by phone on the matter of the boy's tardiness, suggesting that, in order to prevent unfavorable talk, young Stalin be brought by chauffeur as were the sons of Mikoyan and others. The very next day an order was issued that the sons of all members of the Politburo would henceforth either walk to school or ride the bus, but no one was ever late after this.

Selection for Higher Education

6. Theoretically, each student on graduation from secondary (ten-year) school, has the right to select the form of higher education he desires. In practice, however, only half the graduates even apply for such education. The others, because of the additional financial burden placed on their families by any continuation of their education, either attempt to gain admittance to a trade school, where, in a period of one or two years, they will be trained for some skilled trade, or go immediately to work at whatever they can find, usually as clerk, or bookkeeper, or in other white-collar work.
7. Of those who do attempt to gain a higher education, the "gold and silver medal" graduates are accepted by a university without examination. All others take competitive examinations for acceptance by a university or institute. Acceptance by a university is not necessarily entrance into a university. In many cases, and this is particularly true of the more popular universities such as Moscow, which has an exceptionally high academic standing and is therefore in great

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demand, even the "gold medal" students, although accepted, must wait one, two, or three years before entrance because of crowded conditions. This also holds true of the other applicants, who either wait some time before entrance or apply to another university not of their first choice, where they are again subject to competitive examinations for acceptance. Thus, many graduates of the secondary schools find themselves forced to attend a university or institute not of their choice and in many cases a student may have to specialize in something for which he has no bent.

8. As a result, also, of this rugged competition for entrance into universities, a system of graft has come into existence. Since acceptance by a university depends upon the grades made in the competitive examinations, it is a common practice to bribe the secretaries or assistants of the university in order that a slight adjustment be made in the grades. High connections in the Government, needless to say, also are of great help in gaining admission to a university.

Trade Schools for Labor Reserves

9. The Soviet Government has been trying in the recent past to correct the trend toward a surplus of white-collar university graduates, and is now encouraging the development of skilled workers. This they have done through the reduction of the amount of free schooling one can receive and through the decrease in grants given for higher education. Thus, the trade schools have now become an essential part of the educational system and are attended by students who have left school anywhere from the age of fourteen through eighteen. Here the students who could not afford to continue their educations or who did not have the aptitude to go on to a higher institution of learning were fully supported by the Government during the term of the school, usually three to four years. They receive free clothing, food and housing, and are trained under a semi-military discipline. Wearing uniforms, they march to and from work and studies. Upon graduation the students must spend from two to four years working at the Government's discretion in a specific locale. Work assignments are made by the ministry to which the school is assigned and without regard for personal wishes. Upon arriving at a factory, the graduates, now cut off from their families, find they are poorly paid and must live with but the meagerest of means. Drinking and debauchery begin to compensate for their dreary way of life. At the end of their compulsory period of labor they find it impossible to change residence or work. However, by creating this type of school, the Government has added to its labor reserve that can be ordered to move when and where it is most profitable for the Government.

Post-graduate Studies and Higher Degrees

10. Upon graduation from an institute or university a student who has had a good record both academically and politically may, if he so desires, take post-graduate work. Some universities require two years, some three. During this period the student must write and defend a thesis, which he prepares under the direction of an experienced professor. Upon completion of the thesis, it is presented before a university committee, which, by secret ballot, indicates whether the applicant will be granted the degree. If the committee decides that the applicant deserves the Master's or Doctor's degree he is seeking, it will so indicate and the thesis is then approved by the Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR or the Ministry of Culture of the USSR. The thesis may then be published if necessary. Occasionally an applicant may publish his thesis before it has been given final approval by the university committee; in this case, it is certain to be subject to extreme criticism in the press, and it is unlikely that the candidate will receive the degree he is seeking, since the university committee probably would not approve a thesis after it had been so strongly criticized.
11. A factor in the apparently large number of higher degrees in the Soviet Union is that during World War II the Soviet Government realized the dire need for scientists and others with higher education. To encourage individuals to achieve this education, the Government raised the pay and living standards of scientists.

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At the same time, it raised the pay and living standards of all successful candidates for Ph.D. degrees. This brought about a rush of applicants for doctorates. The committees were not necessarily the best qualified, and the "racket" of passing a board for a Ph.D. was a laughing matter in Moscow. Many old government work-horses and bureaucrats suddenly recalled that they also had at some time in the past acquired a university degree and applied for a Ph.D. purely for the sake of the better living standard it allowed. It became a commercialized business, full of charlatans. At length the Government became aware of the situation and placed restrictions on the number of candidates for doctorates.

12. An additional factor to be considered in evaluating the competence of scientists of the Soviet Union is the role played throughout the Soviet Union by the Party; a scientist with a Party card but of mediocre ability is more privileged and destined for a far more responsible position than one without a Party card, even if of far greater talent and superior training.

Assignment Upon Graduation

13. Despite the implication that there exists in the Soviet Union "free" education for the masses, in fact, the education is not free but only a debt contracted by the student to be repaid to the Government in the future by complete obedience to the Government's assignments as to type and location of work.
14. According to existing Soviet law, each student upon graduation from a university or institute must, for three consecutive years, work in that institution or in that area under the direction of the school from which he was graduated. A student has no right to choose where he works or lives. As an example, prior to graduation each student submits his statement of preference as to locality for work. A commission assigns the students to the various areas of the Soviet Union, as needs exist. Only a very small percentage of the students receives the assignment asked for, only those with high Government connections or with exceptionally high marks. The rest must go where they are assigned. Although the term of assignment is three years, at the end of that time the individual still is under the control of the Communist Party, the Komsomol, the Profsoyuz, the local union, and the factory directors. Therefore, he has little to say as to his next assignment. If an individual were to object too violently to his assignment, his efficiency report would be so bad that he would have trouble finding a job anywhere else. And certainly, if an individual were to refuse an assignment, he would lose his occupation and be forced to work at the most unskilled and menial tasks, wherever he could find them.
15. Thus the "debt" is repaid to the Government for its gift of "free" education.

Placement and Advancement in the Teaching Profession

16. Position and promotion in the pedagogical and professional group in the Soviet Union primarily depends on Communist Party membership and political reliability. Although there is no Soviet law demanding that teachers be members of the Communist Party, in almost all cases they are, since the type of work open to them, and, even more important, the location in which they work, depends on whether or not they are members of the Party.
17. In particular, the teachers of history, whether it be of the Communist Party, of the USSR, or of other countries, are almost universally members of the Communist Party. This has been especially true since 1948.
18. The political reliability of the teachers is controlled through several means. Teachers who are not members of the Party find that the better assignments, both from the point of view of living conditions, which is a most important factor in Soviet life, and of professional advancement, are restricted to Party members. The head of the school is in all cases a member of the Party. Further control is exercised through the Party organization within the school, membership in which is not obligatory, but to which most teachers belong. This combination of controls is enough to insure that teachers, if not members of the Party, at least conduct their teaching in complete conformity with the Party

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line. Those who do stray from the straight and narrow are removed from their teaching positions. A case of this kind was evidenced when an instructor in RASh, the military intelligence school, who was considered one of the most competent and experienced instructors with many years of foreign assignments in his background, was removed from his teaching position because he described life abroad accurately, but not in terms which agreed with the official line, which was that abroad all was poverty and slavery.

Political Studies

19. In all technical colleges, institutions, and universities the study of the theory of Marxism and Leninism is mandatory; i.e., the history of the CPSU; the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin; dialectical and historical materialism. The students spend over 50 percent of their study time on these subjects. Anyone who is careless or indifferent to these subjects would certainly invoke suspicion upon himself. It must be pointed out that the majority of the students do not like to have to study Marxist-Leninist theory, but are forced to study it because it is a part of the regular study curriculum. It is impossible to be graduated without passing this subject. As a rule, in the Soviet Union there is a shortage of textbooks and study aids in all other subjects except Marxist-Leninist theory. Libraries and schools are overfilled with Marxist-Leninist works. It is mandatory for every student to have a book on the history of the Communist Party.

Standard of Living of Higher Level Students

20. The best standard of living is enjoyed by students of the Moscow Lomonosov University. Almost all of the dormitories in schools are extremely overcrowded. Each room has a number of students, sometimes as many as 10 or 15 in a small room. The beds are packed in so that it is hardly possible to walk between them. In most cases the dormitories are very far from the school itself, as many as 15 to 20 kilometers away from the classes, and students spend up to an hour and a half to two hours traveling one way. Students have very little time or place in which to prepare their homework. The student's free time is filled with lectures and political meetings. Many of the students work as agitators, having to visit plants and factories where they give political speeches and talks. This also takes away a student's study time. As in other countries, some of the institutions have sport facilities and various clubs, for example, for chess or checkers.

Married Students

21. The percentage of students who are married is very, very small. Because the housing problem is so acute in Moscow, many of the married students live separately, i.e., in different dormitories, as they could never get an official apartment and would certainly not be financially able to rent an apartment on their own.

The Jewish Problem

22. Since 1951 the doors of the following higher educational institutions have been closed to Jews: MVD, MGB, and KGB institutions, Foreign Ministry schools, the Foreign Trade Ministry School, and the Military Diplomatic Academy. Also, there is a limited acceptance of Jews into the Foreign Language Institute. No written directive formally exists regarding this problem, but these restrictions are in effect by the verbal order of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Jews are very dissatisfied with this type of treatment under the Soviet regime.

23. Children of very high-ranking Government ministers who remained from the old regime and hold very high government posts are excepted from this rule.

Education of Women

24. Acceptance of women into higher educational institutions is limited, especially into technical institutions (heavy industry, civil engineering, metallurgy, oil institutions).

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Influence of Party Teaching

25. The final product of the Soviet educational system is a man divided. No matter what his specialty -- be it law, journalism, medicine, or simply two years in a trade school--it must be remembered that from the age of five he has been exposed to and indoctrinated in Communist Party theory and practice. This Party teaching, presented either as a separate subject or woven into the body of his courses, affects a Soviet's attitude toward what he is being taught. When an individual's formal education is completed and he has been assigned to whatever his job may be, everything that he has been taught, any skills which he may have acquired, will continue to undergo inspection by the Party, accompanied by an unending re-education of the individual. Often the pure science taught to a medical student will come in conflict with the views of the Party, and an article on the front page of Pravda will cause professors to revise intended lectures. The creative writing courses at the Moscow School of Journalism are more akin to the study of law, wherein prior cases determine the decision on how a subject will be treated. Any discussion of Soviet education must be held within the frame of reference of the Communist Party.

 Comment. The Politburo is now known as the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

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